

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. CRUI/0027 (formerly MRKS/0126)

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently Amended) An expandable coupling arrangement for first and second expandable tubulars, the coupling comprising:
 - a male thread portion on an end of a first tubular; and
 - a female thread portion on an end of a second tubular,the thread portions having flanks, wherein when the male and female thread portions are engaged, at least one flank of the male thread portion abuts a corresponding flank of the female thread portion in a central region between end regions of the male and female thread portions, and remaining corresponding flanks of the thread portions in the end regions define gaps therebetween,
wherein the arrangement is adapted such that once the thread portions are engaged and are subsequently expanded at least one of the gaps is closed and adjacent flanks are moved to close the at least one gap and to abut each other.
3. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the arrangement is adapted for expansion at least partly by a rotary expansion tool.
4. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the arrangement is adapted for expansion at least partly by a cone expansion tool.
5. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the arrangement is adapted for expansion at least partly by hydraulic pressure.
6. (Previously Presented) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the arrangement is adapted such that once the thread portions are

Page 2

407220_1.DOC

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. CRUI/0027 (formerly MRKS/0126)

engaged and are subsequently expanded, the gaps between the corresponding flanks accommodate for differential expansion between the male and female thread portions.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein a plurality of flanks of the male thread portion abut corresponding flanks of the female thread portion.

9-10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the gaps between corresponding flanks of the male and female thread portions are provided by employing a variable thread pitch in at least one of the male and female thread portions.

12. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 11, wherein the variable thread pitch is provided on both thread portions.

13. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 11, wherein the thread portions include roots and the variable thread pitch is achieved by varying the width of the roots of the respective thread along the length thereof.

14. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 11, wherein the thread portions include crests and the variable thread pitch is achieved by varying the width of the crests of the respective thread along the length thereof.

15-16. (Canceled)

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. CRUI/0027 (formerly MRKS/0126)

17. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein a deformable sealing material is provided in the gaps between corresponding flanks of the male and female thread portions.

18-19. (Canceled)

20. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the coupling arrangement is adapted to be expanded using a rotary expansion tool, and wherein the thread portions define a thread which is cut in an opposite direction to the intended direction of rotary expansion of the coupling.

21. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the male and female thread portions are of a dove-tail thread profile.

22. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the male and female thread portions are of a square profile.

23. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the thread portions are axially parallel.

24. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the thread portions are tapered.

25. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the male thread portion is a pin connector.

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. CRUI/0027 (formerly MRKS/0126)

26. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the female thread portion is a box connector.

27. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the first tubular has a leading end portion adapted to be radially constrained by the second tubular.

28. (Original) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the second tubular defines an undercut groove adapted to receive the leading end portion of the first tubular.

29. (Currently Amended) A method of providing an expanded tubular coupling, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a first tubular including a male thread portion on an end thereof and a second tubular including a female thread portion on an end thereof, the thread portions having flanks;

engaging the male and female threaded portions to form a tubular coupling wherein at least one flank of the male thread portion abuts a corresponding flank of the female thread portion, and remaining corresponding flanks of the thread portions define gaps therebetween; and

expanding the tubular coupling, whereby relative axial movement between corresponding flanks during expansion of the coupling is accommodated by the gaps, wherein expanding the coupling includes securing the connection during expansion by abutting at least some of the remaining corresponding flanks.

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. CRUI/0027 (formerly MRKS/0126)

30. (Original) A method of providing an expanded tubular coupling as claimed in claim 29, wherein the tubular coupling is expanded using a rotary expansion tool, said rotary expansion tool causing the male thread portion to axially extend and the female thread portion to axially contract.

31. (Previously Presented) A method of providing an expanded tubular coupling according to claim 29, wherein the tubular coupling is expanded using a cone expansion tool, said cone expansion tool causing the male thread portion and the female thread portion to axially contract at different rates.

32. (Previously Presented) A method of providing an expanded tubular coupling according to claim 29, wherein the tubular coupling is expanded using hydraulic pressure.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Previously Presented) A method of providing an expanded tubular coupling according to claim 29, wherein expanding the tubular coupling creates the relative axial movement between corresponding flanks that at least partially closes the gaps.

35. (Currently Amended) An expandable coupling arrangement for first and second expandable tubulars, the coupling comprising:

a male thread portion on an end of a first tubular; and

a female thread portion on an end of a second tubular,

the thread portions having flanks and being movable radially outward, wherein when the male and female thread portions are engaged, at least one flank of the male thread portion abuts a corresponding flank of the female thread portion, and remaining corresponding flanks of the thread portions define gaps therebetween such that at least some of the gaps at least partially close when the thread portions move radially

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. CRU/0027 (formerly MRKS/0126)

outward, wherein at least some of the gaps completely close when the thread portions move radially outward.

36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 35, wherein at least some of the gaps are adjacent trailing surfaces provided by at least some of the remaining corresponding flanks.

38. (Previously Presented) An expandable coupling arrangement as claimed in claim 35, wherein at least some of the gaps are adjacent both trailing and leading surfaces provided by at least some of the remaining corresponding flanks.